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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EFIS](#) [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [CO](#)

SUBJECT: COLOMBIA WANTS TO JOIN IATTC - BUT WITH CONDITIONS

REF: 2004 State 179987

[11.](#) Summary: The GOC has decided to ratify the Convention on the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC), and will apply to join the Commission at the upcoming IATTC meeting in June. Colombia will ask the IATTC to grant certain conditions to "facilitate" Colombia's ratification of the convention. End Summary.

[12.](#) On May 27, the GOC notified diplomats from IATTC member states that Colombia has decided to ratify the IATTC Convention, and will present its application to the Commission during the upcoming IATTC meeting in June. According to the GOC (and as transmitted in GOC diplomatic note 29792 (faxed and pouched to WHA)), the GOC will ask the IATTC to grant two conditions that will "facilitate" the GOC accession to the Commission.

Condition 1: Size of Catch

[13.](#) In 2002, IATTC members agreed to grant fishing permissions for the Eastern Pacific Ocean (EPO) to vessels listed on the IATTC's Regional Vessel Registry. Nine Colombian vessels were registered at that time, resulting in an authorized capacity of 7,130 cubic meters of tuna per year.

[14.](#) As a condition for IATTC ratification, Colombia requests that the Commission increase its authorized capacity to 14,046 cubic meters. In addition, it requests that the IATTC recognize the additional capacity gained by Colombia when 5 Bolivian vessels were re-flagged to Colombian nationality. Finally, Colombia wants assurances that the IATTC will consider increases in future capacity allowances, allow for growth in the industry.

Condition 2: Closure Periods

[15.](#) As a condition for its ratification of the IATTC Convention, Colombia is requesting a closure period transition until January, 2007. During the transition, the GOC will require its fleet to stand down for 42 days, but will allow operators the flexibility to decide which of the two closure periods they will observe. According to the GOC, the tuna fleet will use global positioning satellite tracking systems to monitor compliance. The GOC states this regime is required to protect the tuna processing industry from a 42 period of inactivity.

[16.](#) During the transition, the GOC will lobby the IATTC to change its closure period policy, hoping the Commission will adopt the Colombian policy of staggered closure periods elected by fleet operators. When asked about strategies to prepare the tuna processing industry for compliance with the current IATTC closure period policy, the GOC repeated its plan to lobby the IATTC for change from the inside, backed by studies of the impact its staggered closure system has had on tuna populations in the EPO.

[17.](#) Comment: Colombia's new focus on the IATTC was brought on by concerns over the GOC's non-compliance in 2004 with the IATTC closure period and questions raised in 2003 over the inclusion of a non-authorized vessel in Colombia's tuna fleet. These issues became even more pressing in the context of negotiations toward a free trade agreement (FTA) between Colombia and the United States.

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